



**IOWA DEPARTMENT
OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

**2012-2015
STRATEGIC PLAN**

stewardship **HISTORY** community

collaboration learning **ARTS** innovation

QUALITY OF LIFE access

restoration vision cities heritage integrity

CREATIVITY education diversity

economic development customer service Iowa

preservation **VITALITY** passion culture

experiential investment collections recreation

sustainability resources **TOURISM**

2012-2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS (DCA)

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Letter from the Director

It never ceases to amaze me how many diverse programs and services are provided by the Department of Cultural Affairs. Yet, I am continually surprised by how few Iowans truly know what our department provides to the state.

What would Iowa look like without the DCA? Would...

- our Main Streets have the same character from revitalized historic properties?
- our public buildings and universities feature public art components?
- our historic battle flags be stabilized?
- arts, culture and creativity be supported at the state level?
- families be able to readily access their heritage?

Every year, conversations occur among state and local elected officials, community leaders and civic and business groups regarding how to improve Iowa and shape our state into a more attractive, competitive place to live, work and play. Such topics as jobs, education, safety, and healthcare permeate these conversations. But none of them can be discussed without considering the one critical piece of the puzzle that underscores all the rest—Iowa's quality of life.

With a budget that is less than one-half of one percent of the overall state budget, the DCA provides a long-term return on investment for Iowans by helping lay the foundation for cultural vitality, historic preservation and a thriving creative economy. This investment sees results in more sustainable communities, workforce retention and a sense of vitality that will position Iowa to be more competitive in the future.

As the DCA works to lay the foundation for Iowa's quality of life, it is helping the state achieve greater success in its overall goals. The result of this work is a strategic plan that maps our future and aligns the Department with the four goals announced by Governor Terry Branstad in January 2011:

- Create 200,000 jobs
- Increase family incomes by 25 percent
- Give Iowa students the best education in the nation
- Reduce the cost of state government by 15 percent

We are eager to serve Iowans across the state and look forward to the work ahead of us. On behalf of the Department of Cultural Affairs, I am pleased to present this 2012-2015 Strategic Plan, which begins our journey toward a more culturally vibrant Iowa.

Sincerely,



Mary Tiffany Cownie, Director



The showpiece of the 25-mile High Trestle Trail in Central Iowa is a 13-story bridge built in the footprint of a former rail bed. The structure features six overlooks, each with interpretive panels offering mini-lessons in the region's cultural and natural history.

With supporting grant funds from the Iowa Arts Council, public art created by renowned Iowa artist David B. Dahlquist was selected by the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation to create four 42' tall towers.

The dark bands represent geologic coal veins found in area limestone deposits and 41 steel "frames" over the bridge represent support cribs within an historic coal mine.



"Art is not just an object to hang adjectives like 'pretty' and 'interesting' upon. Art is about new perspectives. It's about documenting the aspects of our humanity that can't be fully explained in newspapers and scientific journals. Art is to be experienced fully with every particle of our being."

--Idris Goodwin, playwright, poet, essayist and performer, Iowa City

Executive Summary

The Department of Cultural Affairs was created in the state government reorganization in 1986. The department's two divisions, the Iowa Arts Council and the State Historical Society have a much longer history of service to Iowans. With such a rich history, it is fitting that the Department of Cultural Affairs calls the State Historical Museum home, a facility which collects, preserves and showcases Iowa's treasures that itself can trace its roots in state government back 120 years. Generations of Iowans have been touched by the programs and services provided through this department.

Though organized as one department, the DCA has never undergone strategic planning as a single, cohesive organization. With a desire to move forward as a stronger, more unified entity, a department-wide strategic planning process becomes critical to future success as the department continues to better assess its resources and expertise internally, while ensuring it is focused on the common goal of leveraging cultural resources across the state of Iowa.

In November 2011, Department of Cultural Affairs staff and boards of directors began a comprehensive strategic planning process. Over several months, a wide range of issues and interests was discussed, with the most important being the overall impact the DCA should have on Iowans and the state. This process culminated with the creation of a strategic plan that will steer the department in fulfilling its mission.

The 2012-2015 DCA Strategic Plan core strategies:

Guide responsible management of cultural and heritage resources

Amplify cultural and education outreach

Deliver exemplary customer service

Strengthen organizational effectiveness

This recalibration will position the department to be more efficient and effective, reinforce its purpose and assert its role as a driver for quality of life, economic development and growth across the state.

"Keki Me Si Metose Neniwa," by Richard C. Thomas, mural commissioned by the City of Waterloo.



Department of Cultural Affairs Overview

Mission

The Department of Cultural Affairs has primary responsibility for development of the state's interest in the area of the arts, history and other cultural matters.

The State Historical Society of Iowa (SHSI) connects generation to generation – past, present and future. As a trustee of Iowa's history legacy, SHSI identifies, records, collects, preserves, manages and provides access to Iowa's historical resources.

The State Historical Museum of Iowa exhibits and cares for a rich collection of historic artifacts while also providing history education programs for children and lifelong learners.

The Iowa Arts Council enriches the quality of life for Iowans through support of the arts.

The Iowa Great Places program is designed to promote bold thought, innovation and entrepreneurship at the local and regional level in Iowa and provides guidance to communities to create a vision and roadmap to enhance quality of life.

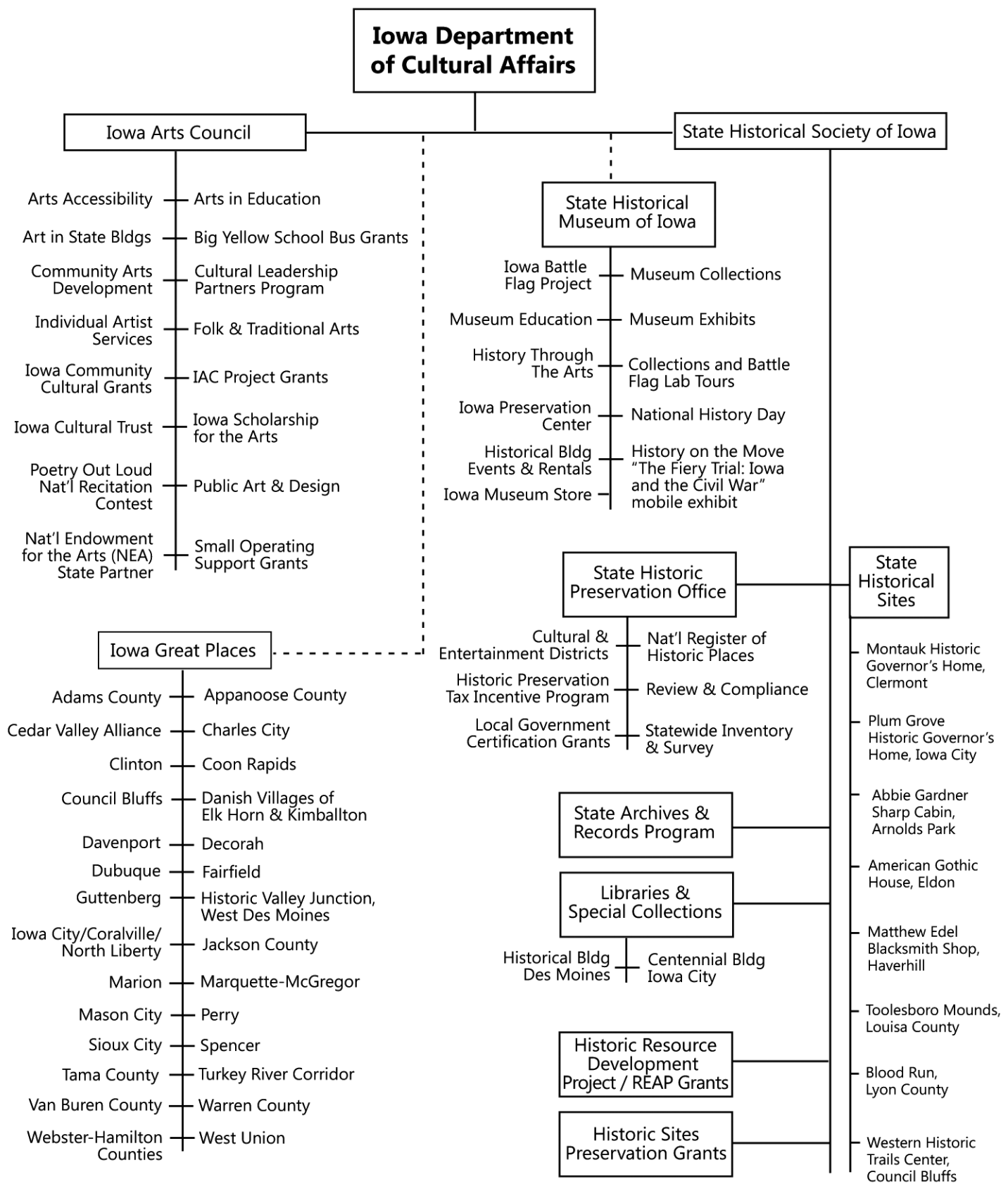
As a DCA Cultural Leadership Partner (CLP), the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids is one of 56 organizations statewide that demonstrate an exemplary record of programming, managerial excellence and community service year-round. Leveraging annual operating support grants from DCA, CLPs assume an active leadership role in their communities and the state while imparting a significant cultural and economic impact on the quality of life in Iowa.



Guiding Principles

The Department of Cultural Affairs understands its work must be based on a commitment to:

- Dynamic leadership through the stewardship of Iowa's cultural resources
- Iowa's heritage, its role in the present and its impact on the future
- Creative and responsible management of DCA resources
- Quality public service based on the highest standards of conduct and integrity that exceed customer expectations
- Evaluation of DCA's work to ensure relevance, effectiveness and meaningful advancement of department strategies
- Instilling energy in publics served
- Global access to department resources
- Competent, honest, educated analysis and results delivered to a diverse public
- Listening and transparency
- Respecting best practices



Strategy 1: Guide responsible management of cultural and heritage resources

Iowa's cultural and heritage resources connect generations in ways that help Iowans understand who they are, where they came from and where they are going.

Encourage effective management of Iowa's cultural resources.

The preservation and protection of Iowa's cultural and heritage resources are essential components of the department's mission. As preservation technologies continue to advance, the DCA must identify and pursue additional strategies to further its work in this area. Working through public and private partnerships will allow the department to facilitate development and investment in Iowa's cultural infrastructure. The evaluation of departmental programs and initiatives will ensure the DCA meets professional standards in all disciplines. The DCA will provide leadership by facilitating collaboration among cultural stakeholders to develop a unified vision for the quality of life in Iowa.

Serve as a catalyst for cultural enrichment while cultivating emerging trends.

As a leading promoter and supporter of cultural interests throughout the state, it is imperative for the DCA to identify, nurture and inspire emerging trends. Engaging Iowans in meaningful arts experiences brings vitality to communities while enriching their quality of life. This commitment to creativity, innovation and cultural enrichment will ensure Iowa continues to prosper and grow.



“e+l+m+n+t+a+l” is a public art work in multiple parts positioned around the entrance and lobby of the Hach Chemistry Building on the campus of Iowa State University. The work incorporates chemical patterns and elements, transforming the basic to specific and elemental.

This work is made possible in part through the Art in State Buildings Program, administered by the Iowa Arts Council.

Strategy 2: Amplify cultural education and outreach

As the department strives to reach its goals, it must first build a framework that begins at the local level. To this end, DCA is dedicated to partnering with communities large and small to articulate a clear and dynamic cultural vision.

Create an infrastructure that provides the greatest access to Iowa's cultural resources.

Creativity and innovation will be the driving forces behind community development in the future, and the DCA is uniquely positioned to offer expertise in this area. The DCA's current technological capabilities are modest and significantly outdated; therefore implementing enhancements based on internal efficiencies and constituent needs will help strengthen the department's ability to support Iowa's cultural infrastructure. In addition, the development of a field services program will allow the department to deliver its expertise and resources to Iowans in their communities. Finally, relationships established at the local level will help identify gaps in resources and the partnership opportunities that could fill them.

Ensure constituents recognize and have ready access to genuine, authentic cultural experiences.

The overall health and well-being of Iowa communities can be developed by ensuring Iowans recognize and have ready-access to genuine cultural experiences. Establishing partnerships with private and public organizations, including other state agencies, will enhance these opportunities. To succeed in this effort, the department will need to become an "aggregator" of cultural and educational information. This content may be determined by conducting a quality of life survey that measures the relevance of cultural heritage in daily life. Once this information is gathered, DCA will need to build upon its role for the state as an information provider, and effectively disseminate it to the public and key decision-makers through its website, newsletters, presentations, media, and other outlets.



In 2011, the State Historical Museum launched "The Fiery Trial: Iowa and the Civil War," a mobile exhibit housed in a 32-foot trailer that travels to museums, libraries, schools and other venues to serve Iowans in their communities.

The exhibit is part of DCA's "History on the Move" educational outreach program, which began in 2010.

Strategy 3: Deliver exemplary customer service

As a state agency, the DCA understands it must be accessible, knowledgeable, guiding and supportive of the people, projects and programs it serves. Most importantly, the DCA is committed to delivering exemplary service to the people of Iowa.

Ensure constituent needs are met in a timely, professional manner.

New technologies and an ever-increasing demand for information have changed the way organizations interact with customers and constituents. With public service being a cornerstone of the department's mission, the development of new policies and procedures to respond to constituent inquiries will ensure their needs are met in a timely and professional manner. Establishing front-line interactions that direct constituents to appropriate, knowledgeable resources are critical to providing exemplary customer service.

Assure staff skills and backgrounds are appropriate to meeting constituent needs.

To be successful in fulfilling its mission, the department must identify and understand the current needs of constituents. Through a full assessment process, the DCA will evaluate and ensure employee skill sets match customer and department needs.

Improve and expand relationships with key stakeholders, decision-makers and the public.

Too often, the work of the department slips under the radar of key stakeholders. This work includes the recording and archiving of official, essential business documents of state government; community engagement of history and arts; the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic properties; or engaging students in arts and history educational learning that develop lifelong critical thinking skills. Strengthening its outreach to key stakeholders, including legislators and other decision-makers, will help the DCA be successful in fulfilling these and other areas of its mission while also elevating the department's profile. The development and implementation of a department-wide communications plan will determine key audiences, priorities and resources. These efforts will improve, strengthen and expand relationships with key stakeholders, decision-makers and the greater public for providing technical assistance, enhancing communication and facilitating resource expansion to support arts, culture and history in Iowa.



Built in 1910, the Historic Park Inn Hotel in Mason City is the last remaining hotel in the world designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Working through the DCA's Iowa Great Places program, Mason City created a framework and visioning process for community improvement projects, with the Park Inn Hotel as the centerpiece. The DCA's State Historic Tax Credits and Iowa Great Places funding helped support the preservation of the Historic Park Inn. Once an abandoned and dilapidated eye-sore, this historical and internationally significant building is now a major attraction in downtown Mason City.

Strategy 4: Strengthen organizational effectiveness

DCA will take a department-wide perspective in prioritizing the mission-based, broad range of programs and services with new efficiencies and collaborations.

Re-evaluate DCA responsibilities to ensure priorities are mission-critical and carried through all levels of the organization.

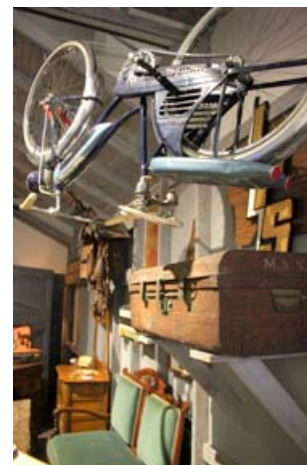
With areas of interest in Iowa's historical assets and cultural arts, the DCA must evaluate its responsibilities to ensure priorities are mission-critical and carried throughout the organization. In that context, a review of the Iowa Code and the department's Administrative Rules will ensure the DCA's mission is compatible, and the DCA staff is engaged in developing priorities. An annual evaluation of internal and external factors will allow the department to adapt and set priorities. This will help the department find innovative ways of enhancing the value of programs and projects it offers to Iowans.

Manage and support internal and external change.

The DCA is becoming more efficient and effective as it serves Iowans. To that end, the elimination of unfunded mandates and antiquated language from the Iowa Code related to the DCA will help the department focus more on its core mission. Annual professional development opportunities will ensure staff is current in their disciplines. Guided directional change from management, with input from staff, will help lead the department, adapt as necessary and move forward.

Encourage and facilitate internal and external communication and collaboration opportunities.

The DCA's areas of interest are vast and complex, with work units focused primarily on immediate duties and responsibilities. Geographic and physical separation has fostered a working environment populated by "silos" that hinder collaboration. Today, the department has an opportunity to tear down these "silos" by prioritizing projects and programs on an annual basis. This approach will identify opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborative project teams to work together and bring additional value to projects and programs. The implementation of new internal communications methods will help convey departmental policies and direction as well as issues impacting DCA operations.



The Sioux City Public Museum preserves and shares the heritage of Sioux City through a variety of exhibitions, educational programs and events and has become a premier cultural destination for the Siouxland region.

The museum is a 2011 recipient of an Iowa Cultural Trust Endowment Challenge Grant. Administered by DCA, these grants help Iowa non-profit arts, history, and cultural organizations strengthen their long-term financial sustainability by leveraging both public and private dollars to increase their endowments. Endowment Challenge Grant recipients must raise a minimum of \$3 in new endowment funds for every \$1 of state grant funds awarded.



*"I've gotten everything I need and want in Iowa
- education, work, home, family, friendships,
community, and my writing. Iowa has never given
me a reason to 'Live the Arts' anywhere else."*

--published author Kali Van Baale, Bondurant

Conclusion

In December 2012, the Department of Cultural Affairs will mark a milestone when celebrating the 25th anniversary of the State of Iowa Historical Building in Des Moines. This anniversary will provide an opportunity to update the facility along with the offerings of the State Historical Museum of Iowa.

Reflecting on the last 25 years, the DCA's commitment to preserving and protecting Iowa's historical assets has remained steadfast. The DCA's dedication to supporting and nurturing the arts across the state is unwavering. In this regard, the department has pursued areas of interest that focus on improving the quality of life in Iowa communities while also stimulating economic development and impact.

The recently completed strategic planning process has brought the future into focus. The department understands its continued success will be largely dependent on its ability to adapt to change and capitalizing on the opportunities that are presented as a result.

This understanding has driven the creation of this strategic plan, which will lead the department forward by focusing on guiding responsible management of cultural and heritage resources, amplifying cultural and educational outreach, delivering exemplary customer service and strengthening organizational effectiveness.

With a strong belief in the power of its vision and the scope of its work, the Department of Cultural Affairs looks forward to serving and partnering with Iowans to ensure a culturally vibrant quality of life for their communities.

Henry Lischer House, Davenport



Before



After

City National Bank and Glass Block Building, Mason City



Before



After

Pictured above are two projects that were named Projects of Merit by the State Historical Society Board of Trustees for Historic Tax Credit projects completed in 2009. At top is the Henry Lischer House in Davenport; below is the City National Bank and Glass Block Building in Mason City.